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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Approved: WH
10/12/59

Memorandum of Conversation

DECLASSIFIED

DATE: 9/26/59

1:00 p.m.

SUBJECT: Problems and Procedures Paper

Camp David
DATE: 9/26/59
1:00 p.m.

Recategorized as
Category "A"

75/ Warren A. Henderson

PARTICIPANTS: United States
The President
Mr. Akalovsky

USSR
Chairman Khrushchev
Mr. Troyanovsky

COPIES TO: S/S
G - Mr. Merchant
C - Mr. Reinhardt
EUR - Mr. Kohler
S/AE - Mr. Farley
The White House - Gen. Goodpaster

Ambassador Thompson, Moscow
Defense - Mr. McElroy
ISA - Mr. Irwin
JCS - General Twining

The President had the Problems and Procedures Paper (copy attached) read to Mr. Khrushchev in Russian, whereupon Mr. Khrushchev replied that his first impression was that the paper contained nothing substantive and that it was a mere list of problems and possible procedures. It seemed to freeze the existing positions rather than suggest specific steps for solving the existing problems. He said that the only thing this paper provided for was a commitment on the part of the Soviet Union not to sign a peace treaty with Germany. The paper also put the Berlin question in the first place and failed to provide any specific recommendations with regard to disarmament.

The paper seemed to confirm the reports which had been circulated before his arrival in the United States that the United States expected to impress him with its might and wealth to such an extent that the Soviet Union would retreat from its position on Germany and Berlin. Mr. Khrushchev said that he had known about the wealth and the power of the United States even before coming to this country and, therefore, he could not be impressed or intimidated.

The President replied that the purpose of the paper was to set up procedures under which the outstanding issues and problems could be periodically reviewed at the highest level so as to see what progress was being achieved in certain areas. It had been his

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hope, the President said, that the paper would not freeze the respective positions as Mr. Khrushchev had said, but rather help toward negotiation of reasonable solutions. As to Mr. Khrushchev's reference to the United States' intention to impress him with its power, the President said that Mr. Khrushchev had not been invited here to see our power and might. He said he was sure that Mr. Khrushchev had at his disposal good services and people who were informed on the situation in the United States. The President also pointed out that he himself had never used the word power in his statements. The main point was that there should be no ultimatum by either side that it would take unilateral action.

Mr. Khrushchev replied that the paper in effect was an ultimatum by the American side and that if the procedure suggested in it were to be followed nothing would happen except that the Foreign Ministers would pull out their old papers and restate their old positions. This in turn would lead to the Soviet Union's signing a peace treaty with Germany with all the consequences which this would entail.

The President observed that there was nothing more inadvisable in this situation than to talk about ultimatums. Both sides knew very well what would happen if an ultimatum were to be implemented. The big question was to find out how to move ahead and find reasonable approaches and solutions to the existing problems. For instance last fall the Soviet Union had presented its position with regard to Berlin and explained some of the reasons why it was taking the position. Now it appeared that the Soviet position was that the United States must run away in order to have that problem solved. This of course is unacceptable to the United States and the President said the only thing that the United States wants is to have Soviet assistance in seeking reasonable solutions to all the problems. The President pointed out that he was not asking for the early unification of Germany because he himself did not know how and when this could be brought about. What he did want however was that a solution be found which would satisfy the people in West Berlin, East Germany, West Germany and also all the other powers that had signed the armistice protocol together with the Soviet Union years ago. The intention of the Soviet Union to go ahead on its own had created a new problem and what the United States was trying to do was to find a reasonable solution to this problem without having to run away or without being deprived of the right to talk.

Mr. Khrushchev thanked the President for his words and said that he understood his thinking; yet, he said, the paper just presented was dealing only with procedures and contained no substance. The set-up provided for in the paper reminded ^{him} very much of Adenauer's ideas. If the Soviet Union were to be dragged into this set-up, solutions of problems would be put off for ten or fifteen years

or even indefinitely. He said that he saw no reason for supporting Adenauer on this score. As far as Berlin was concerned he said that he wanted to repeat that attempts should be made to find a solution which would not affect the prestige of either side. A time limit should be set up within which the United States and the USSR would apply pressure on the two Germanys and urge them to settle their differences and come to terms. The Soviet Union was flexible as to the duration of that time limit. If the two Germanys achieved no progress in their negotiations after the expiration of the time limit, a peace treaty would then be signed by agreement between the USSR and the US.

The President responded by emphasizing that Berlin is not the big question between the USSR and the United States. What created difficulties was the Soviet attitude toward this question which prevented discussion between the two countries in a bigger way and of more far-reaching importance. What worried the United States was the fact that the Soviet Union insisted that the Berlin question had to be settled its way and that then the other problems could be negotiated. The President said that he did not know precisely how the Berlin question could be resolved but that he had hoped to set a friendly atmosphere in which negotiations could be conducted. The Soviet position on Berlin had created a difficult situation and, therefore, it was necessary to find a reasonable solution.

Mr. Khrushchev said that the United States should understand in what a difficult position the US paper was putting him. The Soviet Union had introduced at the UN far-reaching disarmament proposals and the US was now referring them to a disarmament group and to a series of meetings without even stating its views on those proposals. At the same time the paper committed the Soviet Union not to take any action with regard to Germany or signing a peace treaty. The Soviet Union believed that Berlin was not the primary question and that it should be put in the second place after disarmament.

The President agreed again that Berlin was not the biggest problem between the Soviet Union and the United States but repeated that if the Soviet Union did not act as a partner and intended to take unilateral action, the situation would remain very difficult.

Mr. Khrushchev denied that the Soviet government intended to take unilateral actions and referred to the Foreign Ministers meetings this summer. In the course of those meetings the Soviet Union had expounded its position but the Western side just would not listen to it. It appeared to him that the reason for that was Adenauer's unwillingness to have the German question settled. Mr. Khrushchev professed not to understand why the Western powers needed the occupation regime in West Berlin and why they didn't want to liquidate it by signing a peace treaty. He repeated that the Soviet

Union did not want to take any unilateral action and that he wanted to solve the German problem together with the United States in the friendliest possible manner.

The President observed that the paper had never been intended as a stand on positions; its purpose was simply to indicate how different problems could be studied, both bilaterally and multilaterally in an intelligent way, and then, if agreement could be reached on the establishment of a better basis for negotiations, the respective positions on individual problems could be presented in detail.

Mr. Khrushchev rejoined by saying that there was nothing new in this paper, that it contained nothing about the views of the United States on the points listed in it. The paper said nothing on disarmament or on the relaxation of tension in the world; it contained no provision for relieving our peoples of the arms burden. Thus it gave no hope to the world. Mr. Khrushchev said that it appeared to him that the United States was not yet ready for disarmament -- this was very disappointing and if it were true there was nothing left for the peoples of our countries but to continue to bear the burden of the armaments race.

The President stated that Mr. Khrushchev was apparently making a mistake if he thought that the United States hesitated to present its position. The United States did not hesitate to explain its position as fully as possible on such questions as disarmament, propaganda, the ideological differences between our two systems, but such positions must be negotiated. The purpose of the paper was to provide for a procedure under which negotiations could be conducted and under which the Heads of State could periodically review their status.

Mr. Khrushchev replied that this was an old method and that something new was needed. Under this US plan many questions would arise: such questions as that of the basis for the work of the various conferences provided for in the paper, their membership, the question of parity, etc. In other words this plan was no improvement as against the situation that had existed so far. Mr. Khrushchev said that he was sorry that he did not understand this scheme or the principles underlying it, but that his impression was that it did not provide for anything new. The scheme, he said, was devised to bind the Soviet government and to permit the United States to conduct its own policy from a position of strength. The Soviet Union found such a policy unpleasant and outdated. Mr. Khrushchev then continued by saying that he was pleased with the reception accorded him in the United States and with his meetings with the President. Yet, while he and the President seemed to be in agreement when talking in general terms, the old positions taken at the Foreign Ministers conferences reappeared as soon as they came down to specifics. This

was very disappointing and he was very sorry that the situation was not different.

The President then suggested that the conversation be interrupted and that Chairman Khrushchev and he go to lunch. He said that he wanted to add only one thought -- that he was willing to make as many procedural concessions as necessary if the Chairman could suggest a better method for negotiations. Yet there was one point which he had to stress. ~~He~~ ^{He} said that he would have to resign if ever he accepted a time limit after which the United States would have to withdraw from Berlin. Such a proposition would never be accepted by the American people. What was necessary was to negotiate such a plan as would be acceptable not only to the United States and the USSR but also to Europe as a whole. The President emphasized very strongly that he just could not agree to be forced out of Berlin and then sit down and discuss other problems. b1
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Mr. Khrushchev stated he could not understand why the question was put in this plane. He said that he personally and the Soviet Union wanted peace and it was for this reason that the Soviet Union wanted a peace treaty with Germany. Since a peace treaty with Germany would not be signed for warlike purposes, he could not understand why it would disturb the American people. Neither he personally nor the Soviet people could understand why a peace treaty was regarded by the American people as a threat to peace. As far as the President's reference to ~~his~~ being forced out of Berlin was concerned, Mr. Khrushchev said that this was not the Soviet Union's intention. It seemed to him that agreement could be reached on the problem of disarmament and also on working out a document on Berlin without setting a specific time limit but which could not be interpreted as meaning that the occupation regime would be perpetuated. The United States seemed to object to the Soviet Union's insisting on a specific date while the Soviet Union thought that the United States wanted to perpetuate the occupation regime -- therefore perhaps the two sides could try to avoid both extremes and attempt to work out a document which would neither set a definite time limit nor be formulated in such a way as could mean that a perpetuation of the occupation regime was endorsed. Mr. Khrushchev said that he understood the President's concerns and his difficulties but that he also hoped that the President understood his own situation. He said that the Soviet Union wanted a peace treaty with Germany and that the United States was threatening it indirectly both in press reports, which spoke of the possibility of a conflict over Berlin, and in statements by American generals who had spoken about sending their tanks to break through to Berlin. Mr. Khrushchev then again referred to Chancellor Adenauer and said that it was unnatural for the United States to support Adenauer's policy against a peace treaty, because after all the United States had acted correctly when it refused to listen to Stalin and his associates and signed a peace treaty with Japan. b1
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The President replied that no peace treaty was under discussion here. In recapitulating the situation, the President said that he understood that in view of the fact that the United States did not want to perpetuate the occupation regime and that the Soviet Union did not want to try to force us out of Berlin, both sides would try to negotiate and see how soon the differences on this score could be resolved, differences which the Soviet Union had been calling residues of war. If on this basis progress could be reached, then other, broader areas could be broached and thus a brighter future for humanity could be secured. The President said he understood that Chairman Khrushchev did not like the American paper; therefore he suggested that Mr. Khrushchev's staff prepare a short paper presenting the Soviet approach in a concise manner so that it could be discussed, if not tonight, then perhaps tomorrow morning.

Mr. Khrushchev replied that he didn't see much point in putting out a paper because a reshuffling of subject matters or points would not change the general situation. As he put it, the result of an addition does not change if the components change place. However, he did not clearly reject the President's suggestion, but only expressed doubt as to its usefulness. The conversation ended at 1:45 p.m. whereupon lunch was served.

Camp David
September 26, 1959

The major problems between the US and the USSR and the principal irritants to the relationship between the two seems to be:

1. Berlin and Germany.
2. Disarmament, including the current Nuclear Test negotiations.
3. Propaganda and the lack of adequate contact and exchange of persons and ideas.
4. Ideological and other conflicts involving third countries.

These problems are interrelated and will not be resolved at once. The most promising avenue for progress seems to be to set up procedures to assure a continuous search for solutions through peaceful negotiation. The US, the USSR, the UK and France have responsibility in most of these matters. It would seem possible to set up permanent consultative machinery between these powers, with other interested powers brought in as required, as follows:

1. A conference of Foreign Ministers to review progress every six months;
2. A meeting of Heads of Government with Foreign Ministers similarly to review progress every year;
3. Provision for over-all review at the Heads of Government level after five years;
4. Special machinery, either multilateral or bilateral as appropriate, can be set up for more extensive study of these problems. This could be done on an ad hoc basis or on a more formalized basis as in the case of the Nuclear Test Conference or of the Ten Power Disarmament Group.

It would be made clear in a manner acceptable to the Heads of Government that all of the above presupposes that no unilateral action will be taken at any time which would vitiate the operation of this process of peaceful negotiation.